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CUEVA DEL GATO.

Within a few miles of the city of Ronda, by the lower road to Gibraltar, in the beautiful Val de Angostura, is a chasm in the mountains which form its northern boundary, through which there rushes a brawling stream to join the river below. Its sides are covered with a luxurious brushwood, and the most gorgeous wild plants.

Just below its opening there is a small cave, which is sometimes resorted to by the shepherds of the district. This, probably, was the abode of some of the wild tribes which peopled this country in primeval times. I exhibit a stone celt which was found there by a friend of mine the same day that I visited it.

LIII.—ON AN AGREEMENT, IN IRISH, BETWEEN GERALD, NINTH EARL OF KILDARE, AND THE MAC RANNALLS; EXECUTED AT MAYNOOTH, NOVEMBER 5, 1530, AND SEALED WITH THE SEAL OF THE COLLEGE OF MAYNOOTH. By C. W. RUSSELL, D.D.

[Read May 24, 1869.]

AMONG the grounds upon which the authenticity of a historical document may be impeached, there is none so formidable as the suspicion of an anachronism. Had the ancient and highly interesting instrument which I have the honour to submit this evening to the consideration of the Academy chanced to remain unnoticed for four or five centuries longer, it is far from improbable that its genuineness might come to be called into question on the ground of a palpable misdate. The College of Maynooth has occupied so large a share of public attention during the present century, and the date and circumstances of its origin have been so frequently discussed, that few facts in the modern history of our country are more firmly established and more unquestioningly accepted than that of its foundation by Mr. Pitt in 1795. So entirely have the many controversies regarding Maynooth College, in and out of Parliament, occupied the public mind with the existing institution, as to shut out, not merely the memory, but even the idea of another earlier foundation of the same name. And thus it may readily be believed that a future antiquarian of, perhaps, the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth century, to whose judgment the alleged agreement between the Mac Rannall* and the Earl of Kildare, in 1530, might be submitted, would, on discovering that this document purported to be sealed with the seal of the College of Maynooth, at once pronounce it to be an unskilful forgery, that College not having been founded till nearly three hundred years after the professed date of the agreement.

* The Irish orthography of the name is *Magradhnaill*; but I have thought it convenient, except in the Irish Deed and the translation of it, to follow the generally received spelling—Mac Rannall.

It is hardly necessary for me, nevertheless, to say that this conclusion would be entirely erroneous. The deed, as well as the attestation, is undoubtedly genuine. By a somewhat remarkable historical coincidence, the Maynooth College of which the world has heard so much for the past seventy-five years, occupies the site of an older but more short-lived institution of the same name, the latter, however, being dedicated, not to St. Patrick, but to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The College of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Maynooth was established, in pursuance of the disposition of Gerald, eighth Earl of Kildare, who assigned the manor of Rathbeggan and the lands of Kiltele and Carbrestown, in Meath, for its endowment, by his son Gerald, the ninth Earl. This nobleman, having in 1518 obtained the sanction of the Archbishop of Dublin, built the College in immediate contiguity to the Castle of Maynooth; and appointed and endowed a master, five fellows, priests, two clerks, and three boys, with the obligation of offering prayers for the prosperity of the Kings of England and of the Earls of Kildare and their family, while living, and for the eternal repose of their souls after death. The nomination of the master, sub-master, and boys, was reserved to the Earl, with the condition of the master's and sub-master's receiving institution from the Archbishop. The roll of fellows was to be filled up by election, in which the master should enjoy a double vote. All these ordinances received the sanction of the Archbishop, and were confirmed by Royal letters patent, dated October 12, 1518; and it is worthy of note, in illustration of the Mac Rannall Deed, that the collegiate body was, by virtue of these letters, constituted a corporation, with the privilege of a common seal.

I shall not trace further the details of the history of the College, which the Earl subsequently endowed more amply, rebuilding at the same time, to be used, as its chapel, the ancient Church of St. Mary, which had been attached to the castle from the middle of the thirteenth century, and which, having been more than once rebuilt since that time, is at present the parish church of Maynooth. I shall only add that, although the College shared the fate of other religious houses in 1538, and was formally surrendered to the Crown by the provost in October and January, 1540-1,* yet it was in the full enjoyment of its new privileges in 1530, the date of the agreement with which I am now concerned. Unhappily, the College seal, originally affixed to the deed, has disappeared, although the slip of parchment by which it was attached still remains; and I have sought in vain, in every other quarter which seemed to afford any promise, for another impression of an original which, for the modern College as well as for the representatives of the noble founder of St. Mary's, would possess the very highest interest.

Independently, however, of its relation to the College of St. Mary of Maynooth, the deed—which, through the kind permission of the noble owner, his Grace the Duke of Leinster, I am enabled to lay before

* An account of the property of the College of St. Mary is given in Queen Elizabeth's Rent-Roll (1553), the whole being at that time the property of the Crown. See Mason's "History of the Cathedral of St. Patrick," p. 62.

the meeting—possesses a very great historical interest. Owing to a variety of causes, among which a chief place is assigned by Hardiman* to the desire on the part of English grantors of land in Ireland to destroy all evidence of previous right and possession on the part of natives, the number of deeds, covenants, assignments, and other legal documents, in the Irish language, is exceedingly small. In the learned Essay on the subject read by him before the Academy, and published in its "Transactions," he was able to refer to but thirty-nine such instruments, all, or nearly all, relating to the territory of Thomond or North Munster; nor am I aware that since Hardiman's time the additions to this class of documents have been very considerable. The mere circumstance of its language, therefore, would give to the Agreement now before me a certain amount of interest. But it will be seen that it possesses for its own sake an interest entirely independent, and, I may almost venture to say, unique. Not one of Hardiman's deeds, although they present a great similarity of form and language, at all resemble it in purport or in tenor. As the original contains many contractions, I have had a literal transcript of it made, which, together with a translation, is here subjoined.

IS h-e ro cuñrað agur ðeimtiur ata etir ðeðoib Mac ðeap-
aile lapla cilli-bapa agur Maðraðnaill, .i. Feblim mac
Concobair mic Mupéað, agur Maelpuaðnað mac Eoðain mic
Uilliam, agur Ip mic ðriain mic Uairne, agur Semar mac
Maelpuaðnað mic Pefgail, do ceð agur do toil a ceile agur
maite cloim Maileaclain go h-imlon .i. feilling ar an cap-
tun ina fuil cin að h-Ua Ruairc agur ac Maðraðnaill
ðon lapla gaða bliaðna agur a íc gaða Samna, do cinn
a copanta ina copaid air gað aen ða m-biaib þa cumaðoib
an lapla. Slana ðe agur minna na h-eclaíre air Maðraðnaill
agur air na ðainib maitei rin þa comall ðon lapla. ðeallab
agur fipinne in lapla rip rin do comall ðoib-þen. Ip iac na
þaðna do bi do laðair in cunnarþa rin .i. in t-lapla þein
agur Uilliam ðailip agur Semar ðoair agur Uilliam ðuioð agur
Concobair mac Culpuaið. Na ðaine maite a dubþamari þemaimn
do eaððaið in cuñrað rin agur Mailin oð mac Mailin h-i
Mailconairpe do rðrið h-e ina þaðnupe þein in cuiced
la do mí Nouimber a mað Nuabac. In t-oðtmað cine hannri
þa ri Sacpan in inbaib rin, Annó Domini Milleþimó cun-
gentepimó tpiðepimó. Ní þoibe þéla að Maðraðnaill agur
do opðaið þé þéla Coláipoe Muig Nuabac ar in ðeimtiur-þo.
Tpi mapc do þein að in lapla ar in ðuine ar a m-biaib þiaða
bacþar gell ðon maep, .i. Concobair mac Culpuaið. A
leth rin að Maðraðnaill agur að na ðainib maitei do rinne in
cunnrað-þa, agur a leð eli að in lapla.†

* "Ancient Irish Deeds," p. 3.

† By the kind permission of his Grace the Duke of Leinster, a lithographed fac-simile of the Deed, after an exact and beautiful copy from the accomplished pen of Mr. O'Longan, accompanies the present paper. See Pl. xl.

“This is the covenant and indenture that is between Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, and Magradhnaill [Mac Rannall]—namely, Phelim Mac Concobhair Mac Murchadh, and Maelruana Mac Owen Mac William, and Ir Mac Brian Mac Owny, and James Mac Maelruana Mac Fearghal, by will and consent of each of them and of the chief men of clan Melachlain, collectively: to wit that a shilling for every quarter of land which belongs [pays rent] to O’Ruark or Magradhnaill shall be paid to the Earl every year and every All Hallows in consideration of the Earl’s defending and assisting them against all men subject to his authority. The faith of God and the oaths of the Church are sworn by Magradhnaill and the aforesaid chief men in pledge of fulfilment to the Earl. The promise and troth of the Earl, on the other hand, are pledged to them for his fulfilment thereof. The witnesses present at the agreement were the Earl himself, and William Walsh, and James Boyce, and William Tuite, and Concobhair Mac Culruadh. It was the aforesaid chief men who dictated the agreement, and Mailin-oge Mac Mailin O’Mailconery, wrote it in their presence, on the fifth day of the month of November, at Maynooth. The eighth King Henry was King of England that year, Anno Domini 1530. Magradhnaill had no seal, and he ordered the Seal of the College of Maynooth to be affixed to this indenture. The Earl subjects to a penalty of three marks any one who is indebted who shall refuse a pledge to the steward, to wit Concobhair Mac Culruadh: one-half to Magradhnaill and the chief men who made this covenant, and the other half to the Earl.”

The agreement herein set forth has no parallel among Hardiman’s Irish Deeds. In the latter, with the exception of a few of the most modern, the parties are exclusively native Irish, and for the most part they relate altogether to property—deeds of sale, mortgages, wills, marriage contracts. But the Mac Rannall Deed possesses, in addition, an important political and social character. It will be seen that it is a formal agreement between the Earl Gerald on the one part, and on the other the native Irish sept Mac Rannall, represented by Felim Mac Connor Mac Murchadh, by Mulrony Mac Owen Mac William, by Ir Mac Brian Mac Antony (Ownie), and by James Mac Mulrony Mac Fearghal, on their own part and that of the chiefs of Clan Melachlain; to the effect that they shall pay to the Earl, yearly at All Hallowe’en, the sum of a shilling per carucate [quarter] for all the land that owes rent or chiefrie to O’Ruark or Mac Rannall; the Earl on his part guaranteeing to them, in consideration thereof, protection and defence against all his own retainers and dependents. It concludes with a clause of distress, imposing a forfeit, in case of rescue, of three marks, one-half to go to the Earl and the other to Mac Rannall.

Of the many topics which this ancient instrument suggests, I shall confine myself to two—First, the persons named or referred to in the deed; and, secondly, the relations between the native and the Anglo-Norman traces, which the agreement appears to indicate as existing at this period.

Among the parties named in the document the only personage his-

torically notable is the Earl himself, Gerald, ninth of that ancient line. His character and history, his adventurous career and melancholy end, are too familiar to readers of Irish history to require any notice at my hands; but I may mention that the existence of such relations between the Geraldines and a remote western sept, like that of Mac Rannall, as this agreement discloses, dates from an earlier period than that of the ninth Earl Gerald, and may most probably be traced to an expedition of his father, Gerald, eighth Earl, into Connaught in 1499, in which he reduced several castles, and overran part of the territory of the Mac Rannall, although no special mention is made of that sept as being engaged in the rising which occasioned this expedition. The Mac Rannalls were of the same stock with the O'Ferralls, and their possessions lay in the ancient territory of Conmaicne, in the present county of Leitrim, but chiefly in the territory of Muintir Eolus, the district lying between Slieve-an-Iarain and Slieve Carbury, and coinciding with the modern baronies of Leitrim, Mohill, and Carrigallen. O'Dugan, in his well-known genealogical poem, refers to the seat of the Mac Rannalls in terms of high admiration:—

Magradhnaill cluimtear anoir
Gur muintear alunn Eoluir.

"Magradhnaill is now heard
Over the delightful Muintir Eolus."*

Like most of the Irish septs, the Mac Rannalls were divided into several clans—as Clan Melachlain Mac Rannall, and Clan Maelruana Mac Rannall, both which are named by the Four Masters in the entries under 1485. The former is specially represented in this agreement, and must have been of considerable pretensions in the sept, since I find that in 1468, on the death of Cathal Roe, the "full chief ['lancaoir-eac']" the clansmen of Melachlain Mac Rannall were strong enough to set up a chief of their own choosing in opposition to Teige, the son of the deceased chieftain.† I have searched in vain, however, not alone in the Four Masters and in the several Calendars of Irish State Papers of the period, but also in the pedigree of Mac Rannall in the Ulster Office,‡ kindly communicated to me by the Ulster King of Arms, for the names of any of the four parties to the agreement on the Mac Rannall side; but that some friendly interchange of good offices subsisted between the Earl and the individuals of the sept, may be inferred from the fact that the chaplain sent to Rome, in 1534, by Lord Offaly to beg absolution for the murder of Archbishop Allen, was Cahir Mac Rannall.§ The name in this form began to be disused at an early date. A Roll of 22 and 23 Henry VIII., dated October 9, 1531, already recognises the change to the English form, Reynolds, and authorizes "Charles Reynolds, otherwise Magraghnell, bachelor of laws" (manifestly the chaplain

* O'Connellan's "Four Masters," p. 607, note.

† "Annals," A. D. 1468.

‡ "Pedigrees," vol. i., p. 81, and following.

§ Lord Kildare's "Earls of Kildare," p. 136.

just referred to), to live free from all Irish service, and to enjoy the English laws.* In the latter part of that century among the forty-one Mac's and twenty-six O's, who, on October 5, 1585, surrendered their Irish names and customs of inheritance to Sir Richard Bingham and the Commissioners, the "Mac Granils" are enumerated. Notwithstanding this surrender, however, we find them figuring among the Irish force which opposed Bingham several years later, in 1590. And, nearly forty years later, in 1629, among the grants of lands in the county of Leitrim, by Charles I., seven distinct grants were made under the old name to Connor Mac Murragh Mac Grannell, Tirlagh Mac Grannell, and five others, while but a single roll contains the English name of Reynolds—that containing a grant of lands in the barony of Mohill, to "Humfry Reynolds, his heirs and assigns for ever."† Still the change, if slow, has been complete. The English name Reynolds has long entirely displaced the Irish patronymic, even in its hereditary seat; and the well-known George Nugent Reynolds, of Letterfian, in Leitrim, a notable local celebrity in the last generation as a wit and poet, whose name attracted considerable notice some years since on account of a claim made on his behalf to the authorship of the "Exile of Erin," was a descendant of the Mac Rannalls of Muintir Eolus.

Of the parties to the covenant named on the side of the Earl I am only able to recognise by independent notices two—William Walsh, who, as appears from another deed cited by Lord Kildare in his "Earls of Kildare,"‡ was the Earl's standard bearer.§ and father of Silken Thomas's devoted follower, Robert Walsh, who was the protector of the infant heir after the arrest of Silken Thomas and his uncles, and whose name, together with those of his brother, Prior Walsh, and the Cahil Mac Rannall, already referred to, is included in the Act of Attainder; and James Boyce, who was Governor of the Castle of Maynooth,|| of whom an interesting letter is preserved by the Marquis of Kildare in his "Earls of Kildare," and whose pithy exclamation on occasion of the retribution which awaited the treason of Parese, the betrayer of Maynooth Castle to the Deputy, during the absence of Silken Thomas, was, as I am reminded by my friend Mr. Gilbert, the original of the long proverbial, and not yet entirely forgotten saying, "'Too late,' says Boyce." Concobhair Mac Culruadh was, as appears from the document itself, the Earl's steward or bailiff.

But the chief interest involved in this curious document lies in the light which it appears to throw on the social and military condition of a large portion of the Irish districts of the kingdom, about the middle of the reign of Henry VIII. For it is impossible to doubt that this covenant with the Mac Rannall sept, although now an exceptional and perhaps unique instrument, must be regarded as one of a class, and as the representative of a system which prevailed at the time over a large

* Morrin's "Calendars of Irish Rolls, Henry VIII.," p. 2.

† Morrin's "Calendar of Patent Rolls, Charles I.," pp. 441-2. ‡ p. 189.

§ "The Castle of Maynooth," pp. 13-4, quoting Holingshed's "Chronicle," 1570.

|| Lord Kildare's "Earls of Kildare," p. 146.

part of the kingdom beyond the limits of the Pale. The late lamented Mr. Herbert Hore, with rare appreciation of the true value for the real purposes of history of many minute historical memorials, which to others have little more than a personal or genealogical, or at best an antiquarian interest, was at much pains to publish in the "Kilkenny Archæological Journal" a large portion of the ancient Rental of the Earl of Kildare, which is preserved among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, and the historical importance of many of the seemingly smallest details of which he fully recognised.

Through the kindness of the Marquis of Kildare, I have been enabled to examine this Rental. It was begun in 1518; but it comes down as far as 1564; and it is curious to find in it, on August 15th, 1562, not only an entry of the very payment from the Mac Rannalls, which is covenanted in the Agreement now before us, but also in the very same folio, corresponding entries for the territory of "Brene Iroryke," which, as will be remembered, is included in the terms of this Covenant.

But the Mac Rannall and O'Ruark payments are only specimens of a host of similar tributary payments, filling a large number of folios in the Rental. The system of which they form a part, although its existence will be understood without difficulty by those who are familiar with the State Papers of Henry VIII., appears in strange contrast with the commonly received representations of the state of Ireland in the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to which the Anglo-Norman was strictly circumscribed within the shrunken limits of the Pale, and the Border English with difficulty maintained themselves against the steady advances and constantly recurring predatory incursions of the native population.

"Beyond the borders of the Pale," says one of the most recent and popular English writers on Ireland under Henry VIII., Mr. Froude,* who describes as "a narrow strip some fifty miles long and twenty broad" the Pale of this period,† "the Common Law of England was of no authority; the King's writ was but a strip of parchment; and the country was parcelled among a set of independent chiefs, who acknowledged no sovereignty but that of strength, and levied tribute on the inhabitants of the Pale as a reward for a nominal protection of their rights, and as a compensation for abstaining from the plunder of their farms." In a word, the relations of the border English Palemen to their Celtic neighbours outside the Pale, are popularly considered to have been somewhat like what Scott, in "Rob Roy," describes as the condition of the lowland proprietors in their unpleasant proximity to the lawless Highland clans, from whom they obtained a precarious security solely by the payment of the well-known and most distasteful impost of Black Mail. Such an impost, undoubtedly, *was* levied off their Saxon neighbours by many of the northern chiefs. Even after the date of the Deed which is before us, complaints are found in the reports sent to the

* "History of England," vol. ii., p. 247.

† Ibid.

King from Ireland, that O'Neill was 'calling for his Black Rent in Meath, and Mac Murrough and O'Carroll in Wexford and Tipperary;'* and among the abuses set forth for reformation, one of the foremost is "the black rentes and tributes by Irishmen obteyned of his Majesty's subjects."† That the same practice was still pursued in the reign of Elizabeth, may be inferred from another proclamation of Council; and it was renewed, though on a less regular footing, by the O'Hanlons and others, during what is known as the 'Tory War in Ulster' after the Restoration.

But it will be seen that the effect of this Mac Rannall covenant would be to reverse the picture, and to exhibit a Sassenagh Earl (if, indeed, Kildare, the *Hibernis Hibernior*, may be so called) in the character of a *levier of Black Mail from the Irish*, as the price of protection from the aggressions of the Earl's own people. And, lest it should be supposed that this exaction from the Mac Rannall was due to some special and exceptional circumstances, it might easily be shown, if time permitted, by an examination of the so-styled "Duties upon Irishmen" in the Rental Book of the Earls of Kildare, that the same or similar tributary relations were extended over a large portion of the purely Irish territory;—a vast number of other Irish names—as the Mac Murroughs, around Mount Leinster; the O'Hanlons in Forth; the O'Byrnes in Idrone; the O'Tooles in Imail; the O'Mores in Leix; the Mac Gilpatrick's in Ossory; the O'Dones in Iregan; the O'Dempseys in Glanmalira; the O'Connors in Offaly; the O'Molloys in Eglish; the Mac Geoghegans in Kinalea; the O'Melaghlins in Clancolman; the Shynnachs (Sionnach) in Muintir Tagane (Kilconry); the Magauleys in Cabry; the O'Brians in Brawny; the O'Ferralls in Anally; the O'Reillys in Brenny; the Mac Mahons in Oriel; and the Mac Dermody's in Moylurg;—being all severally registered in the Rental Book for their respective yearly payments in precisely the same terms, and with the same formality as the 'Mac Rannall of Moynterolys.' The natural inference is, that, although the legal instruments may have been lost or destroyed, these several payments must have been founded on covenants similar to that with the Mac Rannall now under consideration. The stipulated payments are of the most various kinds, and may serve to illustrate the social condition of the time. Some were, like that of Mac Rannall, in money; the major part, however, were in produce of various kinds—gerrans and capulls (horses), rudders (fat kine), cows in calf, sheep, swine, fish, honey, butter, &c. The tribute of the O'Dwyers of Killymeanagh, was a nest of goshawks; while the Mac Mahons of Oriel acknowledged no payment beyond the military service of eight sparrrys, or spearmen.

It is observable, too, that in some of the districts the payment is apportioned by measurement of land; while in others, in which, as it may be presumed, the herds of the sept were pastured in common, it is regulated by the number of sheep or cattle. Amongst the covenants on which the payments in the Rental are based, are several entered into by

* "State Papers of Henry VIII.," vol. iii., p. 32. † *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 163.

the same Ninth Earl Gerald, whose covenant with the Mac Rannalls we are considering. In most instances, however, the language, if indicated at all, appears to have been Latin; but an agreement, slightly different in form, in the Irish language, is printed by Mr. Hore in the "Kilkenny Archæological Journal" (vol. iv., p. 127, new series). Several of the entries in the Rental Book make it plain that the agreement must have been with the sept, and not with individuals; and in such cases the payment must be regarded as little short of a formal tribute rendered as the price of protection. In many of them the condition of "defence" is expressly stipulated; some of them grant to the Earl the *kany*s (*kaines*, or fines) or *half-kany*s of the territory; and in most cases they are made "perpetual," or "to the Earl and his heirs for ever." It is curious, too, that some are conditional—a distinction being made between the case of the Earl's holding the office of Lord Deputy and that of his not holding this office; and it is still more remarkable that the effect on the amount of payment in one case or the other is not uniform, but tells differently upon different covenants. In some instances it is stipulated that the payment is only to be exacted while the Earl holds the office of Deputy; and that, should he at any time cease to be Deputy, the payment shall be remitted.* In others the converse principle prevails. It is stipulated that in case the Earl should not be Deputy, the payment is to be reduced by one half.† This distinction, at first sight perhaps paradoxical, is intelligible enough. In the former class of covenants, the motive on the Earl's part would seem to be the desire of giving to the parties, who were powerful and influential, a direct interest in labouring that he should be continued in the office of Deputy. In the latter, the consideration "for defence" is diminished, in proportion as the power of the Earl is diminished by his ceasing to hold public office as Deputy.

I shall only add that in many instances whole clans, like the Clan Melaghlin Mac Rannall in the Deed before us, are the parties to the covenant—as Clan Cahill and Clan Mahon, in the Brenny; Clan Mac Hynward, in Oriel; Clan Mac Shane, in the O'Bernys' Country—and that in such cases the tribute was to be levied collectively, and upon the territory, rather than on the contracting parties as individuals.

I am well aware that this view of the relations of the Earls of Kildare with the Irish will to many nowadays appear strange, and entirely out of keeping with the historical character of the honoured race of Geraldines, who, by their traditional patriotism,

"as torrents moved the earth,
Have channelled deep old Ireland's heart by constancy and worth."

But each age and each generation judges and must be judged according to its own lights. It can hardly be credited that the enforcement of these "Duties," whatever may have been their character judged by the rules

* "Kilkenny Archæological Journal," vol. iv., p. 110.

† Ibid., vol. iv., p. 114.

of constitutional polity, was regarded by the Irish themselves in the sixteenth century as oppressive or unjust. It must be remembered that the same system prevailed under the other great Anglo-Irish families—Ossory, Desmond, and De Burgo; and that the protection thus obtained, equivocal as it may seem to have been, was in many cases almost the only available bulwark against utter misrule. This Mac Rannall Deed, as well as the various analogous covenants, upon which the major part of the payments of the Kildare rental were founded, will be found to be a literal exemplification of the condition of things described in a State Paper addressed to the King in 1534, cited by Mr. Hore, as to the exactions of the Earls of Kildare, Ormond, and Desmond. "For the moyre part all the captains of the whild Irish is in subjection, and doth bere grate tribute to your said Erles, or els by reison of the mariage and norising of ther children, be at ther comandments; whereby it is to be entendyd, that, when thes Erles be reformyd, all thes Irish captaines which is undur ther trubut and at ther comandment, must at all tymys yeld your Grace trubut & service."

It is hardly an exaggeration to say, that over a large proportion of the country included within the territories of the several septs which I have enumerated, the name and authority of the Earls of Kildare, quite as much, if not more than those of the King of England, were, during this period, the representatives of law and order,* at least such law and order as it seemed desirable to themselves to maintain. Nor, with facts like these before us, can we feel much wonder at Henry VII.'s half jesting and whole serious declaration, that "as all Ireland could not rule the Earl, then *the Earl must rule all Ireland*;" at the vehement outburst of Wolsey* before the Council, "*The Earl—nay, the King of Kildare!*—for, when he is disposed, he *reigns* more like than *rules* the land;" or at the traditional popular estimate of this memorable family, which is embodied in Thomas Davis's well-known ballad, already cited—

"The Geraldines!—the Geraldines!—how royally they reigned
O'er Desmond broad, and rich Kildare, and English arts disdained!
Their sword made knights, their banner waved, free was their bugle call,
By Gleann's green slopes, and Daingeann's tide from Barrha's banks to Eochail.
What gorgeous shrines, what breitheamh lore, what minstrel feasts there were
In and around Magh Meaghaid's keep and palace-filled Adare!
But not for rite or feast ye stayed, *when friend or kin were pressed*,
And foemen fled when '*Crom a-boo*' proclaimed your lance in rest!"

* "Earls of Kildare," p. 102.